

If the biggest check you can write is \$5,000, there is no great premium in hiding who you are. When you can write a \$5 million check to back a candidate, suddenly hiding who you are becomes extremely valuable and salient.

So, suddenly, this became very real. But those Justices who had opened the door to unlimited money, when they made that decision, in order to justify that decision, they had to say that the spending had to be transparent. Otherwise, the Citizens United decision would not have worked in the constitutional scheme. They had to say that.

But for the next decade, what did they do about it? Case after case came before them where the dark money problem was raised. We rode through a billion dollars in dark money being spent in our elections. This was on the front page of the newspaper. This was being done in plain view. And what did the Republican Justices on the Supreme Court do to enforce their own stated requirement of transparency? Not one thing.

And so we have had a decade of corruption of government by billionaire interests who can hide who they are and operate through an enormous phalanx of phony front groups whom they have stood up. And if you want to know how real this is, look at what we have had to do in the reconciliation measure to address climate change—because when I got here, there were Republicans willing to address climate change.

We had bill after bill in the Senate that were bipartisan and serious and sincere. That stopped dead in January of 2010. When Citizens United was decided, the dark money spigots opened, and the fossil fuel industry behind them enforced compliance across the entire Republican Party. If you crossed the fossil fuel industry on climate change, if you are Bob Inglis, you were out, you were done. If you lined up with them and did what they said, in came tens of millions of dollars in dark money to support you.

It was a devil's bargain, and it cost us a lost decade on climate change. And now we have to go forward, sadly, in a partisan way to solve this problem. That is the pressure of dark money in our politics. It is behind the capture of the Supreme Court. It is behind voter suppression. This is demonstrable stuff, and we have got to put an end to it. And it is a tragedy and a disgrace that we can't go to cleaning up the dark money mess.

My Republican colleagues and their dark money groups are actually at the point now where they are accusing us of taking dark money. They are accusing Democrats of being the dark money party. Well, we just settled that question tonight. Democrats want to clean it up. They want to protect it. It is as simple as that. That is all you need to know.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I must do a couple of procedural things.

But do my colleagues from Georgia and California want to speak on voting rights?

No. Thank you. I am sure the Senators from New Jersey and Connecticut are very grateful as well.

I will be brief.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 64.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of James Richard Kvaal, of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of Education.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 64, James Richard Kvaal, of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of Education.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Jack Reed, Jeanne Shaheen, Patrick J. Leahy, Martin Heinrich, Catherine Cortez Masto, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Duckworth, Christopher A. Coons, Tammy Baldwin, Chris Van Hollen, Tim Kaine, Thomas R. Carper, Amy Klobuchar, Margaret Wood Hassan, Alex Padilla.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 252.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David G. Estudillo, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 252, David G. Estudillo, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington.

Charles E. Schumer, Tim Kaine, Sherrod Brown, Tammy Duckworth, Robert Menendez, Christopher A. Coons, Benjamin L. Cardin, Chris Van Hollen, Ben Ray Lujan, Margaret Wood Hassan, Alex Padilla, Edward J. Markey, Maria Cantwell, Patty Murray, Jacky Rosen, Tammy Baldwin, Tina Smith.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 260.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Angel Kelley, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 260, Angel Kelley, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, Edward J. Markey, Christopher A. Coons, Cory A. Booker, Alex Padilla, Richard Blumenthal, Mazie Hirono, Chris Van Hollen, Michael F. Bennet, Sheldon Whitehouse, Amy Klobuchar, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Martin Heinrich, Kirsten E. Gillibrand.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 251.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Veronica S. Rossman, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 251, Veronica S. Rossman, of Colorado, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Michael F. Bennet, John Hickenlooper, Christopher A. Coons, Cory A. Booker, Edward J. Markey, Elizabeth Warren, Alex Padilla, Richard Blumenthal, Mazie Hirono, Chris Van Hollen, Sheldon Whitehouse, Amy Klobuchar, Patrick J. Leahy, Debbie Stabenow, Martin Heinrich.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021—
Motion to Proceed

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close the debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 77, S. 2093, a bill to expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-corruption measures for the purpose of fortifying our democracy, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Tina Smith, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Sherrod Brown, Jeff Merkley, Benjamin L. Cardin, Sheldon Whitehouse, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Chris Van Hollen, Amy Klobuchar, Jacky Rosen, Richard Blumenthal, Elizabeth Warren.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum calls for the cloture motions filed today, August 11, be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE
CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I know the hour is late, but we have nearly 30 highly qualified Foreign Affairs and Development nominees who are languishing on the Senate floor. We have to confirm these nominees to fully equip the United States to pursue our foreign policy objectives, and I will be asking unanimous consent to confirm each one.

My distinguished colleague from Connecticut, Senator MURPHY, a member of the committee, is here to join with me in this effort. I know the Presiding Officer is also a distinguished member of the committee.

In the nearly 30 years that I have been working on foreign policy, we have never faced such a confluence of global challenges: a once-in-a-century global pandemic; climate change threatening stability, health, and safety across the world; fueling displacement and resource-driven conflicts; great power competition from an increasingly emboldened China and Russia.

We have the tools to confront these challenges; to promote American values and interests around the world to advance the safety, health, and economic well-being of all Americans. But we cannot do that when we do not have empowered diplomats and development professionals in place to do so.

So I call on this body to confirm these nominees—all of whom the Foreign Relations Committee has moved

with bipartisan support—to put the United States in the best position to advance our foreign policy, development, and national security priorities.

I am calling for confirmation of all of these nominees: those up for Ambassadorships, senior State Department, and USAID positions. We need them in place.

Now, the Trump administration had its first Ambassador confirmed on day 62 of the Trump Presidency. The Obama administration had its first Ambassador confirmed at day 73. The George W. Bush administration had its first Ambassador confirmed at day 75. For the Clinton administration, it was day 75. For the George H. W. Bush administration, it was day 83.

We are now more than 200 days into the Biden administration, and as of this moment, there is not a single confirmed State Department country Ambassador—not one. And going back four administrations, there is a precedent of moving a package of nominees before the August recess.

Under George W. Bush, the Senate confirmed a package of 81 nominees. During the Obama administration, the Senate confirmed a package of 104 nominees. And during the Trump administration, we confirmed a package of 75 nominees.

We should be ashamed of holding the record for the longest delay in fully equipping the State Department and USAID to pursue the foreign policy, development, and national security interests of the United States.

Now, some Members of this body call on one hand for assertive American leadership on the global stage, and, at the same time, they hold up these critical positions. Many of these nominees are career diplomats, public servants who have dedicated their lives to advancing U.S. interests. They have served under the Trump administration in the same way they will serve in the Biden administration: on behalf of the American people.

Many of my colleagues are readily focused on effectively confronting Chinese malign influence. Well, a fundamentally critical element of confronting China is empowered leadership in our diplomatic corps, across the world. So let me be clear. Holding up diplomats to posts across Africa and the Western Hemisphere is effectively ceding influence to China and actively undermining U.S. national security interests.

I recently heard an anecdote from a diplomat in Cameroon. When he travels outside the capital city, Cameroonians will greet him with a “ni hao,” assuming that if he isn’t Cameroonian, he must be Chinese.

Meanwhile, we haven’t had an American Ambassador in Cameroon in more than a year, and the Foreign Relations Committee approved a career diplomat for the post by voice vote nearly a month ago. What could possibly be the rationale for holding him up?